

out there. You like little kids, furry animals, or nonconsensual sex? Guaranteed, there's a scumb—uh, that is, an *entertainment provider*—who can hook you up for a price. Want to share a night with Nadja Daviar or Winona Flying Horse? The real thing might be tough, but you won't know the difference at your local bunraku parlor, where "meat puppets" are surgically altered and equipped with personafix chips until they're better than real—at least for their customers' purposes. And why stop there? Bunraku puppets are just rented for the night—slaves are forever.

## CRIMINAL ELEMENTS (OTHER THAN YOU)

Shadowrunners are certainly criminals, but that doesn't mean that they've got the mean streets to themselves. Let's take a look at some of the other two-legged predators who share the sprawl with you.

### ORGANIZED CRIME

Wherever there's illegal money to be made, you can guarantee that the organized-crime syndicates are on the scene and doing their best to take control of as much of the pie as they can muscle into. The syndicates that shadowrunners are likely to come in contact with include:

- **Mafia:** Everybody's heard of the Mafia—you know, that collection of Italian guys in pinstriped suits and pinky rings? Actually, the Mafia's come a long way in the last couple hundred years, and their influence is still strong all over North America and Europe. Organized into "families" and operating in every major UCAS city, the Mob is involved in just about every lucrative type of crime out there including shipping and smuggling, extortion, loansharking, hijacking, and gambling.
- **Yakuza:** An old and honorable Japanese criminal organization, the Yakuza demands unswerving loyalty from its members and punishes transgressions harshly. Its members—almost always male, Japanese, and human—are usually identified by their extensive tattoos and sometimes by missing pinky fingers (one of the more minor ways they pay for failures). The Yak's major areas of influence are prostitution, gambling, *sokaiya* (shaking down companies for credit and influence), drugs, and chips.
- **Triads:** The Chinese Triads don't get a lot of press when compared with the Mafia and the Yaks, but that doesn't mean they aren't a powerful force in their own right. Each Triad is its own organization, with none of the central control of the Mob and Yak groups. They take a far more enlightened stance toward women and metahumans, numbering many of both (as well as non-Chinese) among their ranks, and also featuring a number of adepts and magicians. Crime-wise, they specialize in extortion, protection, smuggling, gambling, illegal drugs, and BTLs.
- **Vory:** The Vory v Zakone, or "thieves who follow the code," originated at the time of the Russian Revolution in 1917, but since then they've undergone many changes. Exported around the world by Russian expatriates, the Vory are orga-

nized into factions run by a single powerful leader (much like the Mafia). Though involved in smuggling and black market operations, the Vory's most profitable enterprise is black-market information, or "data brokering."

- **Ghost Cartels:** Though the traditional Central and South American narco-cartels suffered setbacks with the development of BTLs, thanks to biotechnology they have increased their crop sizes and profit margins and are getting back in the game with an assortment of traditional drugs and narcotics. Their biggest coup of late has been the development of bioengineered Awakened drugs—though they lack the full magical kick, they still carry enough mojo to take your mind on a ride—catered to exclusive clientele.

These are the big players, but the smaller ones deserve a brief mention as well. Ethnic-based organizations abound—the Pueblo Koshari, the Turkish or Kabul Maffiya, the Arabic Al-Akhirah, the Korean Seoulpa Rings/Jo-pok, the Scandinavian Vikings, and so on. There are also all sorts of specialty outfits, ranging from pirate crews and smuggler networks to assassin groups such as Chimera and the Smokers' Club, and also including the untold number of hacker groups who specialize in Matrix crime.

### GANGS

Below the organized-crime syndicates on the criminal ladder are the gangs. Every sprawl has them, and they range in size from small groups that get together for self-protection or mayhem all the way up to well organized, multi-city gangs that nearly rival some of the smaller crime syndicates.

Gangs come in many varieties: the most common are garden-variety sprawl gangs that control territory and run criminal enterprises like protection, smuggling, or extortion, but most sprawls are also home to mobile "go-gangs" that prowl the highways looking for fun, profit, and victims. Rarer but no less dangerous are "wiz-gangs" made up of young spellslingers who seek their kicks on both the material and astral planes, and Matrix gangs that roam cyberspace terrorizing other users and hacking systems.

Some of the larger and more well known gangs with operations throughout UCAS major cities include the Ancients, the Cutters, and the Spikes, but old gangs die and new ones pop up every day. Wise shadowrunners know that staying on the right side of the right gangs can pay dividends when they need gear or the run starts going to hell.

### ORGANLEGGERS

Getting involved with other criminal enterprises might end up costing you an arm and a leg, but rarely do they mean this literally. With organleggers, all bets are off—and you might end up losing a lot more than a limb or two.

Organleggers are the bogeyman nobody likes to talk about—even "legitimate" criminals like the Mafia and the Yak are leery of getting into the business (though this doesn't necessarily mean they aren't trying). In a society where somebody with a damaged or diseased body part can just head to the hospital or clinic to get it replaced, those body parts have